REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1013 are currently pending in this application. Claims 5-13 have been withdrawn from consideration and so the only claims currently at issue are Claims 1-4.

Appreciation is expressed to Examiner Edmondson for her time and attention during the interview that was conducted at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on August 10, 2005. The remarks below discuss the substance of the interview.

As explained during the interview, the subject matter recited in Claims 1-4 is directed to a method of welding a tubular member, having a thin portion in its circumference, to a member over the entire circumference of the tubular member. The background portion of the present application points out that when welding a tubular member having a thin portion in its circumference to a member over the entire circumference of the tubular member, welding forces acting on the casing tend to deform the casing more markedly at its thin portion. That is, the welding energy tends to deform the tubular member into a generally oval shape whose minor axis passes through the thin portion as shown in Fig. 5. The application also describes that the welding energy applied to the tubular member at the welding start point also tends to deform the tubular member into a generally oval shape whose minor axis passes through the welding start point as generally depicted by Fig. 6.

Taking this into account, the method at issue here seeks to carry out welding over the entire circumference of a tubular member possessing a thin portion in such a way that the degree of deformation is minimized. In the claimed method, the

tubular member is welded over its entire circumference in such a way that welding is started at a point angularly spaced from the thin portion such that welding energy applied to the tubular member at the welding start point cancels the welding energy which is applied to the thin portion and which tends to deform the thin portion and thus the tubular member.

As pointed out during the interview, U.S. Patent No. 2,912,075 to *Pfistershammer* discloses a manner of fabricating tubular members or support structures. The support structures are formed into a tubular shape by providing the edges of a wall portion with connecting tongues as illustrated in Figs. 14-17. When the wall portion is formed into the desired shape, the tongues engage on another in the manner illustrated in Fig. 17. Thus, as explained during the interview, *Pfistershammer* does not disclose a method of welding a tubular member to a member over the entire circumference of the tubular member. Indeed, the background portion of the discussion *Pfistershammer* describes other known support structures formed from welded tubes, and discusses disadvantages and drawbacks associated with such a welded construction. It is thus apparent that *Pfistershammer* is not concerned with welding a tubular member.

As was also noted during the interview, the connection provided by the connecting tongues shown in Figs. 14-17 of *Pfistershammer* extends along the length of the tubular member rather than over its circumference. Further, the undersigned explained that *Pfistershammer* does not disclose a method involving starting welding at a point angularly spaced from a thin portion of the tubular member such that welding energy applied to the tubular member at the welding starting point

will cancel the welding energy which is applied to said thin portion and which tends to deform the thin portion and thus the tubular member.

During the interview, Examiner Edmondson noted the disclosure near the bottom of column 7 which refers to welding or riveting in the alternative. However, upon further examination, it was noted that this description of welding (or alternatively riveting) is described in the context of fixing an auxiliary strap 52 to an outer ring 53. Thus, this portion of the disclosure in *Pfistershammer* does not describe a method of welding a tubular member over the entire circumference of the tubular member.

At the conclusion of the interview, it was agreed that the method recited in original independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the disclosure contained in *Pfistershammer*.

One final point discussed during the interview involved the language at the end of Claim 1 reciting "and tends to deform said thin portion and thus said tubular member." Examiner Edmondson commented that this wording is somewhat awkward in the context of the preceding claim language. The undersigned and Examiner Edmondson discussed the possibility of deleting such language. However, as an alternative, Claim 1 has been amended without narrowing the claims scope to simply add the term "which." The latter portion of the claim thus recites that the welding energy applied to the tubular member at the welding starting point will cancel welding energy which is applied to the thin portion and which tends to deform the thin portion and thus the tubular member. It is believed that with this minor amendment to Claim 1, the wording at the end of Claim 1 is better connected to the preceding language.

For the reasons discussed during the interview and set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed method at issue here is patentably distinguishable over the disclosure contained in *Pfistershammer*. Accordingly withdrawal of the rejection of record and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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